

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR**

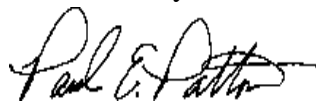
As the Commonwealth prepares to enter a new century, we face many unprecedented challenges to our future growth and development. The proper leadership can turn challenges to opportunities, and my administration is committed to providing such leadership to all sectors of Kentucky. The leadership responsibility, however, extends far beyond the reach of Frankfort and into every county and community in the Commonwealth. Utilizing our tremendous leadership resources from throughout the state will ensure that we set the proper course for Kentucky to take into a new millennium.

Commissioner Billy Ray Smith and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture are striving to provide visionary leadership to our agriculture community. The Commissioner's efforts to redefine the mission of the Department from a regulatory agency to one that is actively involved in the marketing of Kentucky farm products are paying dividends beyond anyone's expectations.

During my tenure as Governor, I have acknowledged the important contribution of our farm families and rural communities to the overall character of the Commonwealth. For the first time, Kentucky has a Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy to provide a direct link between my office and one of our state's largest and most important industries. Working with Commissioner Smith and other leaders throughout Kentucky's agricultural industry, we hope to nurture a climate that encourages agricultural entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and a sustainable prosperity for Kentucky's farm families.

Cooperation and mutual support among the many organizations and agencies which work on the part of Kentucky agriculture will ensure our collective success in the new century. I am committed to promoting such cooperation, and to facilitating a new era of prosperity for Kentucky agriculture. My administration appreciates our farm families and rural communities, and we pledge to continue our work on your behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul E. Patton", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul E. Patton